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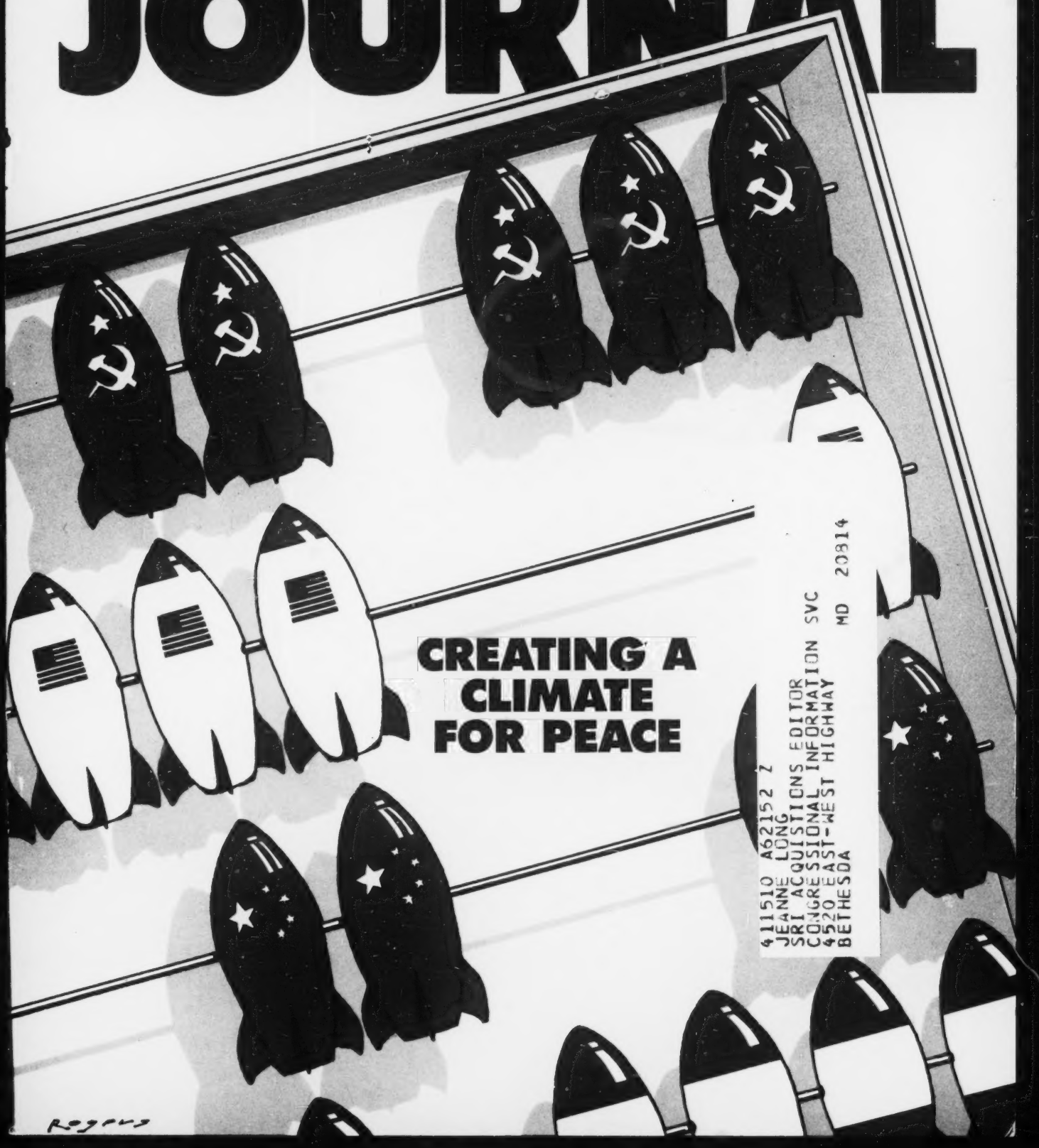
December 1984 PRSA Conference Report

PUBLIC RELATIONS JOURNAL



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The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) is an individual-membership professional society of 11,800 public relations practitioners. Its major services to members include programs of Professional Development and Accreditation, an Information Center, publications, tracking of issues of national concern, and promotion of ethical practice through adherence to PRSA's "Code of Professional Standards." PRSA's mission is, "To serve the public need for understanding and cooperation among its diverse interests by fostering high professional and ethical standards for all those practicing public relations."

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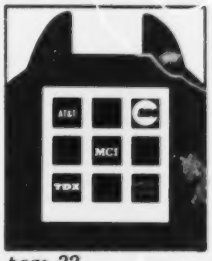

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Minnesota survey shows: "APR" a plus; women gain in numbers and pay

A recent salary survey of members of the Minnesota Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) documented several trends within the public relations profession in the U.S. These trends include a discrepancy between salaries paid to men and to women, the large numbers of women entering the profession, and the relationship between salary and accreditation.

Conducted by Carol Morgan Associates, a marketing communication and public relations firm in Minneapolis, with the assistance of Susan Heckler, an associate professor in marketing at the College of St. Thomas in St. Paul, the survey showed that women are making some important gains in public relations. However, a significant discrepancy still exists between salaries earned by men and women public relations practitioners.

The median salary of women respondents in 1983 ranged from $30,000 to $34,999. Men, meanwhile, reported an average salary of $45,000 to $49,999. When the data were submitted to a multiple regression, sex alone explained 16 percent of the variance between the salaries paid to men and women. Organizational characteristics, such as size and profit and not-for-profit status, may do more to explain the differences between the salaries paid to men and women. A large proportion of women (58 percent) reported earning less than $30,000, whereas only 16 percent of the men reported earnings of $30,000 or less.

On the bright side, however, the number of women earning $30,000 or more in public relations in Minnesota appears to be increasing. Comparing 1983 survey data with that from a similar survey we conducted in 1981, it appears that the percentage of women respondents in Minnesota earning $30,000 or more has increased by 31 percent. Also on the positive side, the number of women in the lowest salary category (less than $20,000) decreased by 14 percent in the same time period.

The size of staffs that are supervised by public relations practitioners appears to be increasing. In 1981, no women respondents supervised more than five professionals. However, in 1983 10 percent of the women supervised more than five professionals. The number of men supervising larger staffs decreased very slightly over the same period.

The Minnesota survey also showed

Salary by years of experience in public relations

Years	Mean salary for men	Mean salary for women	Overall mean salary
0 to 2	$20,000-24,999	$15,000-19,999	$20,000-24,999
3 to 5	$30,000-34,999	$25,000-29,999	$25,000-29,999
6 to 10	$40,000-44,999	$30,000-34,999	$35,000-39,999
11 to 14	$45,000-49,999	$30,000-34,999	$35,000-39,999
15+	$55,000-59,999	$35,000-39,999	$50,000-54,999

Results of Minnesota Chapter survey: 1983 figures show higher women's salaries than 1981.

that more women now report to a president (an increase of 6 percent from 1981) and fewer report to a vice president (a 5 percent decrease). However, the percentages of both men and women reporting directly to a chief executive officer declined, from 16 to 12 percent in the case of women, and from 17 to 9 percent in the case of men. The declines in a reporting relationship to the CEO may be significant for the professional status of public relations.

Approximately 30 percent of the survey respondents were employed in the profit sector in 1983, and 70 percent worked for not-for-profit organizations. The percentage of men working for not-for-profit organizations increased by 9 percent between 1981 and 1983; the percentage of women increased by 4 percent during the same interval. The distribution of respondents over various employment sectors showed no major changes between 1981 and 1983.

Survey results support the observation that more women than men are now entering public relations. Of the respondents to the survey, 49 percent were women. However, of those respondents under 30 years of age, 69 percent were women.

The decline of newspaper experience as a route to public relations was also noted. In 1981, 39 percent of the respondents had previously worked for a newspaper; by 1983 this figure had dropped to 23 percent.

The largest number of accredited respondents was found in departments with from two to five professionals (44 percent). More men (68 percent) than women respondents (32 percent) were accredited, thus demonstrating a statistically significant relationship between accreditation and higher salaries.

Carol M. Morgan
Carol Morgan Associates

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